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LETTER DATED 6 MAY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY
OF THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I wish to draw your attention to the attached conclusions of the first meeting of the Committee on Somalia of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Partners Forum, held in Rome on 4 May 1998.

I should be very grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) F. Paolo FULCI
Ambassador

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Annex

Conclusions of the first meeting of the Committee on Somalia of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Partners Forum

(Rome, 4 May 1998)

The first meeting of the Committee on Somalia of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Partners Forum was held in Rome, on 4 May 1998, under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Italy, Senator Rino Serri, with the participation of Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, the European Commission, the United Nations Development Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Bank, partners of IGAD.

Following the consultations held on the basis of the Final Declaration of the first Ministerial Meeting of the Joint IGAD Partners Forum (Rome, 19 and 20 January 1998) and the deliberations of the sixth Summit of the IGAD Heads of State and Government (Djibouti, 16 March 1998), Egypt attended the meeting and was invited to be part of the IGAD Partners Forum Committee on Somalia.

The Executive Secretary of IGAD, Dr. Tekeste Ghebray, and a delegation from Ethiopia, the country mandated by IGAD to take the lead on the Somali issue, attended the meeting. The ambassadors of Greece and the Russian Federation were present as invited guests.

The participants stressed that the primary responsibility for achieving national reconciliation and peace in Somalia lay with the Somalis themselves. They examined the developments in the peace process and recalled previous efforts undertaken in Djibouti, Nairobi, Mogadishu and Sana'a, as well as, more recently, the Sodere and Cairo agreements and the Addis Ababa meeting of the National Salvation Council. They noted that the expectations resulting from those agreements had not yet been met. In that regard, they stressed the strong need for the faction leaders to demonstrate resolve and commitment towards achieving national reconciliation and the reconstruction of their country. They also noted that there was a need for close coordination and unity of purpose within the international community in support of the IGAD initiative. The IGAD Partners Forum Committee on Somalia will promote such coordination.

Having reviewed the conclusions of the recent Ministerial Council and Summit of IGAD in Djibouti, the participants discussed the ways and means to support the peace process based on the rehabilitation and the building up of administrative capacities in those regions where local leaders and their constituencies demonstrate a practical commitment to peace, stability and national reconciliation. They underlined that this implied strengthening the civil society and local administrative structures in view of the building up of new Somali institutions through a bottom-up approach, with the active involvement of those who have more interest in the end of illegality and violence and the re-establishment of conditions of peace, normal economic life,

rehabilitation and development, such as elders, religious leaders and representatives of civic groups, women's and youth organizations and the business community.

The Committee has considered that in order to support this process with the aim of reconstructing the institutions within the framework of the territorial integrity of the country inside the existing international borders, and in order adequately to prepare an international conference as suggested by IGAD, it is time to identify the problems to be tackled.

The Committee agreed that the following items merit further discussion:

(a) The causes of the conflicts at the local level for the control of territories and resources after the changes introduced by the civil war since 1991;

(b) The inter-clan power balance at the local and national levels;

(c) Focusing the criteria of the rehabilitation and capacity-building activities at the local level;

(d) The linkage between those activities and a negotiated framework at the national level;

(e) Monitoring and security aspects;

(f) The involvement of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity according to their respective charters.

In order to establish a constant dialogue with IGAD on the matter and to promote, together with the IGAD countries, the necessary coordination in the different forums to mobilize support for the IGAD initiative, the Committee has decided to establish a smaller liaison group.

The Committee has urged all Somalis to consider that the present situation of lack of authority, unrest and danger of instability for the neighbouring countries and the entire region cannot continue. The leaders of political factions, the elders, the religious leaders, the intellectuals, the representatives of women's and youth organizations and the business community and all the members of civil society interested in a normal life in their country and in the social and economic development that the Somali people deserve have to realize that in this situation any assistance from the international community cannot continue unless there are radical changes of course towards improving the political and security environment. Those who consider that they have a political role to play should be in their constituencies and work with their people. There is no room for those who would hamper a process in which the opportunity to demonstrate the leadership capacity needed by the people and by their desire for peace will be given.

It is the task of the Somalis to rebuild their country. The participants urged the international community to support those who demonstrate with their behaviour a practical commitment to peace, rehabilitation, reconstruction and social and economic development in their areas and in Somalia as a whole.

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